

Sinha and team win Richard P. Feynman Innovation Prize

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Swept Frequency Acoustic Interferometry, the base technology behind the R&D 100 Award-winning Safire™ oil field sensor technology, was named by the Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation as the most innovative technology coming out of the Laboratory this year.

Dipen Sinha and a team of researchers received the award last week during the Feynman Center's annual OutSTANDING InnOVATION celebration, which honors the year's highlights in technology transfer. Feynman Center Director Dave Pesiri applauded the center's work so far, which has included 150 patents in the past two years, 105 copyrights asserted, 126 federal agency agreements, 37 Cooperative Research and Development Agreements and 104 income-generating license agreements, among other accomplishments.

About Safire™

The Feynman Innovation Prize highlights the most successful technology spinoff of the year. Safire™ is a collaboration between Chevron and General Electric Corp. that uses sound waves to determine the volumetric flow rate of materials inside closed containers. The technology has been successfully deployed into marginally producing oil fields in California's San Joaquin Valley, allowing the license holders to optimize recovery of the last oil reserves within a century-old field, said Duncan McBranch, the Laboratory's Chief Technology Officer, who presented the award.

"It means a lot to me having the Feynman name associated with this award," said Sinha. "Richard Feynman was my hero. As a young researcher, he was the scientist I most looked up to."

Other members of Sinha's Safire™ team include Anirban Chaudhuri, Cristian Pantea, Blake Sturtevant, Alp Findikoglu and Craig Chavez.

Keynote speaker highlights

Nigel Grech, vice president of Verdesian Life Sciences, was the evening's keynote speaker. Verdesian, one of the largest independent plant nutritional companies in North America, has licensed Take Off, an agricultural treatment that enhances nitrogen utilization in plants.

"As executive vice president of Science and Technology at Verdesian, one of my roles is to assess good science, and that's why our relationship with Los Alamos National Laboratory is so important," said Grech, who is the inventor behind more than 30 patents globally.

He praised the Laboratory's management of intellectual property and noted that the count of 150 patents was impressive. Grech also praised LANL's willingness to work with smaller companies, noting that Verdesian was just three people in a garage when the company first started. Take Off was the second technology Verdesian licensed.

"Take Off is based on sound science and is why we partner here," he said. "The science that emanates from Los Alamos is world class."

Other nominees

Other technologies nominated for the Feynman Prize this year included Muon Tomography, Chris Morris, principal investigator; the Parallel Log Structured File System, Gary Grider, principal investigator; Take Off, Pat Unkefer, principal investigator; SOLVE, the Laboratory's most licensed patent and copyright, which uses X-Ray diffraction to create three-dimensional images of proteins, Tom Terwilliger, principal investigator; and a beryllium recycle CRADA with Materion Brush, Inc.

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